

Realization

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BY

JOSEPH STEWART, LL.M.

November 1901

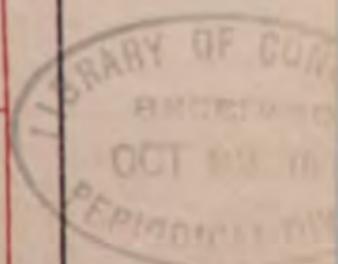
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BY JOSEPH STEWART, LL.M.

VOL. I

NOVEMBER, 1901

NO. 7

The Source of Life Sufficient for Health.

Vital Phenomena are Psychological.

THE physical mechanism of life-function is constructed upon the cell as a unit, the multiplication of which makes more complex organism possible. In this minute organism, which is constantly receiving the closest study by students of biology, a point is reached where vital phenomena apparently stand alone. Chemical and physical laws mingle in helpful degree in the more complex functions and to an extent here, but at this point vital phenomena appear to occur quite independently. Here lurks that ever-present mystery of life which can not be defined in the terms of matter.

With a nicety of learning the physiologist traces the mode of manifestation in the heart-beat, noting the efferent nerve-impulse which proceeds from the controlling center modified by the afferent nerve-impulse arriving from other parts, all nicely adjusting the mechanism and actuating the rythmical action of the heart-muscles; but what happens at that moment in the nerve-cell from which the mysteriously determined impulse is sent forth he does not know and cannot describe in terms of matter.

Given the laws of unorganized matter, science is continually endeavoring to state the vital process in its terms—and continually fails. The laws of the diffu-

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sion of dissolved substances have been supposed to explain intestinal absorption; but the most recent investigation has shown that when all conditions for the operation of this law are absent the cells will select and absorb into the blood the substances presented. Nor will the laws of ordinary filtration explain; for the pressure in the capillaries which take up the substance may be greater than that outside of them.

The laws of the diffusion of gases have long been supposed to fully account for the absorption of oxygen by the lungs and the excretion of carbonic acid; but according to the most recent researches, oxygen is absorbed when the pressure in the blood is greater than that of the air in the lungs, and carbonic acid is excreted when that pressure is less. Thus, these cells have a power of selection and of disposal which handles matter in ways superseding the course of physical law.

Again, it is now learned that the laws governing the permeability of ordinary matter do not apply to the red blood-corpuscles, which exercise a selective faculty through which they take up substances not connected with their particular functions.

The more closely the cell is studied the more certainly is it determined that no terms will describe its acts other than those which we find necessary to apply to an entire organism in its relation to environment.

Superadded to the cause for these individual cell-activities is a more comprehensive power of building up the organs by the union of cells harmoniously active, and the construction of the physical mechanism through the co-ordination of organs.

This co-ordinating and controlling power which holds in its possibilities all the activities of the organism has been called by physiology merely "vital phenomena." It was inevitable that it should receive its next definition and a further elucidation of its nature from psychology. This has come through the study of

those branches of psychic research which have disclosed the powers of the subliminal self. Thus we have been made acquainted with those states of consciousness which lie beneath the normal or environmental consciousness and mind, and which give ample evidence of not only deeper wisdom and faculty than the ordinary self, but an intelligent and intimate control of all the vital processes.

This subliminal consciousness holds within its potentials the sufficient power of expression, and that expression through the organism, even to the individual cell, is the phenomenon of life. It emerges upon the physical plane in but one form of matter—protoplasm. It secures its initial relation there in the construction of the simple cell, and through the multiplication of this point of advantage constructs the mechanism needful for expression. Constructing every cell for this purpose and building them into a perfect mechanism, it controls its every function with unremitting labor and care.

Mind and Health.

In the activities of this consciousness we have life, and in its perfect functioning we must look for health. Though consciousness persists, life may cease when those activities cease. Health may be impaired whenever the perfect relation and interaction are disturbed or a false expression is originated. Health, apparently so simple a thing, is therefore very complex; and the reasons that tend toward its impairment and the means that contribute to its preservation are correspondingly diverse.

But back of every means is a psychological factor which bears a direct relation to the result. Consciousness and mind, by reason of the very constitution of the body, must be the author of physiological changes. There is, indeed, chemism, which the vital power utilizes and originates; but mind is present in all vital changes.

These physiological changes are effected by the mental and subliminal activities and states, and these may be original and spontaneous, or derivative and responsive to environment. Just as the expression of the organism as a whole is largely determined by its response to environment, so is it with each individual cell. Chemicals and substances may, therefore, constitute environmental conditions to which the cells respond, and the resulting vital expression may restore health or impair it.

In the same manner physical surroundings, sunlight, temperature, moisture, sound, color, everything that is the subject of sensation, elicits a vital response of the subliminal self, and the resulting "vital" change may be for health or otherwise.

Likewise the mode of mentation, the habit and character of thought, the mental and conscious state as a whole, powerfully modify the activities of the subliminal forces and seriously retard, inhibit, or accelerate their expression. It is this inhibiting influence of a mode of thought or mental life which is often suspended by hypnotism, after which the subliminal self, no longer under restraint, restores healthful expression.

The character of mind-activities—both subliminal and normal—is, therefore, of the greatest importance. It is well known that they create chemical and anatomical changes in the cells and tissues; that they effect metabolism, renew structures, and increase the number and activity of cells. We will, therefore, seek the means to perfect health in a proper mental and conscious status, not forgetting, however, that the cell-life and the subliminal self respond to whatever stimuli are presented, whether they be physical or mental.

It is assuring to know that the same power which expresses itself as vital phenomena is necessarily sufficient for health as well.

With these facts gradually developing into knowl-

edge we are at no great loss to understand the cause of healing, though so diversely produced. All that awakens into responsive, healthful reaction the powers of the mind, the subliminal consciousness, the cell, whether the agent be chemical or physical environment, imagination, faith or will, produces a vital effect. All that removes the inhibition of wrong thought, whether it be a "change of heart," mental culture, higher ideals, sleep—natural or induced, leaves the deeper powers free to act. All that co-operates with the subliminal consciousness for expression harmonious with universal Being, whether it be mental sunshine, optimism, joy, rationalism, universal love, or faculty-expression, will accelerate those subliminal powers that operate so beneficently for the individual well-being.

CONFORMITY to truth is the only means of coming into relation with cosmic or universal order.

It is difficult to reach at once that plane of realization where truth is esteemed above all pre-conceived opinion and previous teaching. Consequently when the light comes many insist upon receiving it through the avenues of the old false thought from which they should desire escape; and when they give out what they have perceived, it is moulded as nearly as possible to some man-made scheme of philosophy—not untrammelled and free, vibrating with the life of truth.

We must put truth above all else, and be not only willing but anxious to sacrifice all our opinions and theories which are not of it. How else is it possible to attain its illumination?

He who can free himself from the limitations of false thought fits his mind for the immediate cognition of truth, thus creating conditions for greater attainment and the only real progress.

Continuity of Consciousness.

Supernormal Objective Experience.

TN a preceding article, entitled *Consciousness Independent of Body*, a brief consideration was given that class of evidence designated supernormal subjective experience. In this article the supernormal objective experience will be considered.

This class embraces those facts of psychic phenomena which, upon the one hand, purport to be the direct evidences of the influence of discarnate human souls upon our plane of existence, and upon the other, are believed by many to be the manifestation of an "ectenic" or psychic force wielded by the medium's automatic or subliminal consciousness in one class of cases, and in another the manifestation of "secondary personalities" endowed with telepathic faculty. Neither view has been accorded much consideration by any considerable body of scientific men until in quite recent years, because the facts themselves which necessitate an explanation have not theretofore been admitted by such. Both views are now ably supported.

It may be said that a conclusive affirmative answer to no other one question would have a profounder influence upon the lives of men, than that to the one involved in these facts—Does this evidence prove the continuity of life beyond physical death? It must be assumed, therefore, that if people felt free to consider the evidence it would hold for them as absorbing an interest as it does for the savants who have devoted years of patient research and study to it. Probably it is for the reason that they do not so feel free that it is true, as Professor James, of Harvard, has said regarding this subject, that "public opinion follows leaders much more than it follows evidence." Able leaders holding diverging views are not wanting, and public

opinion has ample authority for holding either view, though the weight of opinion is tending strongly in one direction.

The systematic and unprejudiced study of psychic phenomena marked a great advance in the liberality of scientific thought; the entertainment of the "spirit hypothesis" as an explanation has brought that thought closely in touch with the vital importance of their probable meaning. In this connection Professor William Romaine Newbold said of the Mrs. Piper phenomena a few years ago :

"Until within very recent years the scientific world has tacitly rejected a large number of important philosophical conceptions on the ground that there is absolutely no evidence in their favor whatever. Among those popular conceptions are those of the essential independence of the mind and the body, of the existence of a supersensible world, and of the possibility of occasional communication between that world and this. We have here, as it seems to me, evidence that is worthy of consideration for all these points."

It should be remembered that this declaration referred to but one form of psychic phenomena, and that there are other forms which present evidence justifying a like opinion respecting them.

Physical Phenomena.

The first class of this character of evidence to be mentioned is that of physical phenomena. It is not the purpose to give new and original facts. There are plenty of them, and one may find them when he chooses. In discussing the evidential significance alone of phenomena it is advisable to consider cases the facts of which are not the subject of dispute. There are a few which have been given such thorough consideration by leading investigators as to give them this characteristic. They do not differ in any other respect from many other similar cases about which individual investigators are equally well satisfied.

A Classic Case.

An example of these is that of the manifestations witnessed and described by the eminent scientist, Sir William Crookes, F. R. S., as having occurred in the presence of D. D. Home. These were first mentioned by him in the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, January, 1874, and afterward detailed from original notes in *Proceedings Society Psychical Research*, December, 1889, in which latter publication he says "that on dispassionate review of statements put forth by me nearly twenty years ago I find nothing to retract or to alter, I have discovered no flaw in the experiments then made, or in the reasoning I based upon them."

Among the principal facts of these phenomena were the alterations of weights of articles (amounting sometimes to forty pounds), effected at the command of Home, and at times, in the absence of any physical contact by him. Such alterations were tested in some instances by spring balances furnished and held by Mr. Crookes, and upon other occasions by a specially constructed instrument furnished by him and which automatically registered variations in weight measurements. During these tests others carefully examined the surroundings to entirely assure themselves that no physical force or means was being exerted.

Other phenomena, as fire-handling by Home, the movement of objects without apparent cause, the feeling, by those present, of invisible hands, etc., were common.

These instances have become classic on account of the high character of the narrator and the compliance with conditions which satisfy the requirements of scientific inquiry, and subsequent attempts at explanation on any of the common grounds of deception have only strengthened Mr. Crookes position, that they "prove the operation of that 'new force,' in whose existence I still firmly believe."

It would be added that communications received

at the time through Home (in the customary manner in such instances), represented that these manifestations were made by discarnate human souls.

The "Ectenic Force" Theory.

To explain these facts and those of levitation of the human body, the handling of hot substances without injury, the "materialization" of objects and of forms simulating personalities of deceased individuals, upon some theory avoiding the "spirit hypothesis," there has been advanced the theory of a "psychic force" controlled by the subconscious mind. Regarding this, Mr. Frank Podmore, the critic most disinclined to accept the spirit hypothesis, admits that "an 'ectenic' or psychic force wielded by the medium's automatic consciousness can only appear an easier hypothesis than that of the spiritualists, because some of the phenomena are ignored, and some of the difficulties evaded." (Proc. S. P. R., Part XXXIV, 137.)

It should be further said in this connection that if these effects are the result of subliminal consciousness acting upon a "psychic force," then they should be readily reproducible by hypnotic suggestion; but this is something that has never been done.

Phantasms.

Distinct from the phenomenon commonly called "materialization," for whose production some requisite conditions are known, and which may be placed with the physical class, there is the *phantasm* which is a spontaneous manifestation, the requisite conditions for which are unknown, and which can hardly be said to belong to that class. Since the "Census of Hallucinations," which showed the frequency of these phenomena, the fact of their occurrence has ceased to be a matter of doubt among those who have given the subject proper consideration.

If during a normal moment one suddenly and unexpectedly sees the form of another who is not present in the body, and notes that such form adapts means to ends, for instance, has the power of locomotion and perhaps apparently speaks and delivers a message, and it should afterward be learned that such person had died at about that time, the solution would not appear difficult ; and yet it is quite otherwise.

In the first place, explanation may very properly be suggested on the theory of telepathy, or on physical or mental suggestion (the latter being auto as well as other forms). And even when more than one sees the apparition at the same time under the same conditions, suggestion or telepathy from the living is still held to be a sufficient probable cause. In either case the phenomenon would be merely a subjective one, though very real to the percipient.

Mr. F. W. H. Myers gives three conditions which might establish a presumption that the phantasm was more than a subjective hallucination, viz.:

"(1) More persons than one might be independently affected by the phenomenon ; or (2) the phantasm might convey information, afterward discovered to be true, or something which the percipient had never known ; or (3) the appearance might be that of a person whom the percipient himself had never seen, and of whose aspect he was ignorant, and yet his description might be definite enough for identification." (*Id.*, Pt. XIV, 404.)

There are cases which fulfill one or more of these conditions, and a number are to be found in the verified reports.

Again, if the time-relation between the apparition and the death were present in a large proportion of cases, such fact would suggest the explanation popularly believed ; "for, according to the doctrines of probabilities, a hallucination representing a known person would not *by chance* present a definite time-

relation to a specific cognate event—viz., the death of that person—in more than a certain percentage of the whole number of similar hallucinations that occur; and if that percentage is decidedly exceeded, there is reason to surmise that some other cause than chance—in other words, some objective origin of the phantasm—is present." (*Id.*)

Such objective origin would be looked for first in the mind of the deceased, but existing prior to death and conveyed telepathically to the percipient. In the present status of the question science would feel warranted in ascribing the cause of such a phenomenon occurring simultaneously with the death, or soon thereafter, to telepathy from the living, as telepathy is a known cause of hallucination; and if not exceeding a short time elapsed between the two events, it would still be said that a *latent* telepathic impression—that is, one conveyed at the time of the death-crisis, while the person was still alive, and remaining latent in the subliminal consciousness of the percipient for a time—would explain it.

But if the time elapsing were considerable and the percipient were unaware of the death, the probability of telepathy from the living would be vastly diminished, for there are no known cases of telepathy experimentally produced where the latency has exceeded a matter of minutes. If further, there are no ties of blood or friendship between the persons, nothing in the condition of the percipient necessitating latency, and the place where the apparition is seen is one in which the deceased had an interest, telepathy from the living as a cause is practically removed; and if suggestion be absent, the case becomes one to be regarded as a *post-mortem* appearance, and evidencing the survival of the deceased.

There are cases which have met these conditions and carried conviction to the minds of scientific students, among whom was the late F. W. H. Myers,

President of the Society for Psychical Research, who have weighed all the probabilities with great refinement of discrimination and reason.

It should be remembered that if any such phenomenon is ever due to the agency of the deceased exerted after death, most of the instances held to be explainable on the other grounds may be, as well, genuine evidences of survival. But until the fact be established, all phenomena must, from the scientific standpoint, be assigned to known causes when such will explain them, rather than to assume one unknown to science.

Trance-Utterances and Writings.

Trance-utterances by or through embodied persons, purporting to come from persons out of the body, have long occurred, and are of frequent occurrence in our day. It must be evident that one's preconceived notion in favor of, or against the claim, can have no weight in determining it. Putting aside all other questions, the first and only pertinent one is whether the fact evidences the truth of its own claim.

A Classic Case.

We may take one case as a fair example—that of the Mrs. Piper phenomena, which has become classic on account of the long and exhaustive study given it by Dr. Richard Hodgson, Professors Oliver J. Lodge, F. W. H. Myers, William James, and others of the Society for Psychical Research.

The facts of this case are, briefly, that Mrs. Piper passes into a trance, during which time alleged extraneous personalities claiming to be deceased human beings (relatives and friends of the sitters), speak through her organism and use both her hands in writing (all three means being used simultaneously at times), giving information which is supernormal, as far as she is concerned, and often unknown to the sitters. The utterances simulate, often in most delicately discriminating

ways, the personal characteristics, affections, personal opinion and bias respecting philosophy, etc., and evidence a memory of the experiences, of the persons who they purport to be.

Professor William James, of Harvard, assures us that the trance is genuine (*Id.*, Pt. XVII, 447), and I am not aware that any competent person has questioned it. After many years of study, during which the whole life of Mrs. Piper has been under the closest scrutiny, she being under the supervision of the investigators, there is unanimous opinion as to her perfect honesty.

Ten years ago Professor James wrote :

"That the phenomena is a genuine one, however it is to be explained, I now regard as absolutely certain ; and I make the following two statements with the utmost confidence :—(i) Mrs. Piper's attitude is not one of deception. (ii) No conceivable deception on the part of Mrs. Piper can explain the facts." (*Id.*, 446.)

Time and constant investigations have only strengthened these conclusions. Eight years later Mr. Frank Podmore, the critic most adverse to the "spirit hypothesis," wrote :—

"It is tolerably clear that Mrs. Piper's success, at any rate, can not be plausibly attributed to the unconscious reproduction of knowledge normally acquired, nor to the skillful manipulation of information extracted at the time from the sitters themselves. * * * Our choice now seems clearly defined between deliberate and systematic fraud on the one hand, and supernormal faculty on the other." And concluding the question of fraud, he says : "In all these years—now thirteen or more—during which Mrs. Piper has been under the close observation, first of Professor William James and afterwards of Dr. Hodgson and other competent persons, though she has been shadowed by detectives, though her personal luggage, as Professor Lodge has told us, has been searched, her correspondence read, her goings-out and comings-in closely watched—during all these years not the smallest circumstance has come to light reflecting in any way upon her honesty." (*Id.*, Pt. XXXIX, 72.)

The phenomena has therefore stood for some years unchallenged by any competent critic as to either its honesty or its supernormal character.

The Theory of Secondary Personality and Telepathy.

These points having been unquestionably established, the theories of explanation have been given serious consideration. There are two principal ones: the first, that the phenomena proceed from discarnate souls as claimed by the utterances and writings themselves; and second, that they proceed from a secondary personality (or personalities) of Mrs. Piper securing its supernormal information by the faculty of telepathy from the minds of those either present or absent.

Prof. William Romaine Newbold says as to this:

"The only alternative to the 'spirit' theory is the theory which ascribes the phenomena to secondary personalities, derived from the weaving together by Mrs. Piper's nervous mechanism of all the complex suggestions of the seance room, supplemented by telepathic and clairvoyant impressions got in connection with the sitter and with the articles which he brings." (*Id. 9.*)

The advocates of a secondary personality and telepathy from the living, as an explanation, have many difficulties to overcome in order to present a satisfactory cause. For instance—

(a) Facts are often given that are not in the minds of the sitters.

(b) Facts are occasionally given that are not known to be in the mind of any living person, and which are afterward verified.

(c) Some facts only, which are known to the sitter, are subtly used, while others as well known and as easily transferable telepathically, are wholly ignored.

(d) Dim and forgotten memories of the sitters are mentioned, while fresh and present memories are not.

(e) The whole class of phenomena differs widely in these and other respects from all experimentally

produced telepathy, and does not conform to what such experimental knowledge would lead us to expect.

(f) The theory of suggestion influencing a secondary personality is inadequate, for the reason that the strongest suggestions, thoughts, and memories are often wholly ignored by the alleged personality, whose utterances are also frequently opposed or contrary to such suggestion.

(g) Secondary personalities are usually produced by hypnotism. Mrs. Piper is only slightly hypnotizable, and her hypnotic state is in no respect similar to her trance-state. Secondary personalities are susceptible to post-hypnotic suggestion ; Mrs. Piper's "control" is not.

Scientific method requires a known hypothesis to be applied to the utmost before an unknown one shall be invoked. It is upon this that the advocates of secondary personality and telepathy as an explanation rely. This tenacity to one possible explanation in a field where there may be another concurrent one may lead to error. Professor Lodge, of Cambridge, says :

"It ought to be constantly borne in mind that this kind of thought-transference without consciously active agency has never been experimentally proved. Certain facts not otherwise apparently explicable, such as those chronicled in *Phantasms of the Living*, have suggested it, but it is really only a possible hypothesis to which appeal has been made whenever any other explanation seems out of the question. But until it is actually established by experiment in the same way that conscious mind action has been established, it can not be regarded as either safe or satisfactory."

(*Id.*, Pt. XVII, 453.)

If thought-transference be the explanation, it must be presumed to be of a new kind, for, as Walter Leaf Litt. D., says—

"It has nothing to do with thought reading as commonly understood, in which it is necessary that the agent should steadily fix his thoughts upon the idea or

picture which he desires to transfer to the mind of the percipient. The thoughts which are transferred are by no means, as a rule, those which are uppermost in the sitter's mind at the time; the statements made are rather of old, and often half forgotten facts, while distinct attempts sometimes made by the sitter to obtain a deliverance as to particular matters which he had vividly before him resulted as a rule in failure." (*Id.*, 564.)

Professor Newbold inquires pertinently: "Why were these dim memories so clearly reflected, while others, far stronger, produced no effect?" (*Id.*, Pt. XXXIV, 9.)

Dr. Hodgson points out the same inconsistency:

"If we assume that this control was the 'make-up' of Mrs. Piper's secondary personality, it apparently involved some very subtle use of information drawn telepathically from at least the minds of the sitters, and at the same time the most extravagant ignorance and confusion concerning other facts, some of which were known to the sitters." (*Id.*, Pt. XXI, 45.)

But, if these points are difficult, what shall we say of instances where the information on which the communication is based is not in the knowledge of the sitter, but in that of a distant person, and such communication is intended for the distant person, between whom and the medium there is no knowledge of each other? Of such an instance happening in the course of Professor Lodge's investigation, he says:

"The only thought-transference explanation I can reasonably offer him, is that it was the activity of his own mind, operating on the sensitive brain of the medium, of whose existence he knew absolutely nothing, and contriving to send a delusive message to itself!" (*Id.*, Pt. XVII, 456.)

Professor James points out that the phenomena are not analogous to known instances of thought-transference.

"If the supernormal element in the phenomenon be thought-transference it is certainly not that of the sit-

ter's conscious thought. It is rather the reservoir of his potential knowledge which is tapped; and not always that, but the knowledge of some distant living person." (*Id.*, 656).

The theory of telepathy from the living must suppose an extension "far beyond what we have been able to produce experimentally—a telepathy which shall involve not only specific impressions from many distinct persons who have never been near the percipient, but also realistic conceptions of numerous persisting personalities with their own individual streams of consciousness and abiding reservoirs of memories, personalities, moreover, which, so far as we can ascertain, *continue to grow*. (Dr. Hodgson, *Id.*, Pt. XXXIII, 371).

Not only is there a lack of analogy between the phenomena and experimentally produced thought-transference, but the known laws of "secondary personalities" do not operate. Dr. Hodgson and Professor James have tried to hypnotize Mrs. Piper, the former with no success, the latter succeeding in producing a semi-hypnosis, which he describes as "very different from her medium trance." Both frequently gave the control post-hypnotic suggestions, but entirely without success: "no response of any kind was elicited from the temporarily 'hidden personality.'" (*Id.*, Pt. XXI, 56),

The "Spirit Hypothesis."

If this be not secondary personality and thought-transference from the living, what shall we conclude? Professor Newbold says "they as truly reveal to us a new world of mind as the microscope reveals a new world of matter. * * * Are they merely unusually stable dream states, generated in connection with Mrs. Piper's brain, interrupted, perhaps, during her normal life, but resuming the thread of their phantasmal existence with the recurrence of the convulsions that usher in her trance? Or are they what they profess to

be, human minds, divested of their mortal bodies, and leading an independent existence in a supersensible world?—a world as real as this in the only true sense of real, being an inevitable portion of the common experience of conscious beings." (*Id.*, XXXIV, 8.) And again he says: "Evidence of this sort does not suggest telepathy; it suggests the actual presence of the alleged communicators, and if it stood alone I should have no hesitancy in accepting that theory." (*Id.*, 10.)

The difficulty to which he refers is one which all investigators inevitably encounter, namely, the obscurity, confusion, irrelevancy, and error, which are interwoven with the clear and the true in a most bewildering manner. He agrees with Dr. Hodgson, however, that if the statements of the communicators themselves with reference to the difficulties under which they labor in communicating be accepted, it will explain a very large part of it. If it be true, further, that many who profess to deliver messages pretend, for various reasons, to be those who they are not, such fact would explain much more.

The consistency of the communications with their avowed claims respecting their origin is entitled to the same evidential weight as it would be accorded in ordinary human affairs. "Individual scraps of information may be ascribed with some show of plausibility to a telepathic or clairvoyant origin, the arrangement of these scraps into mosaics of thought, which, however defaced, still often irresistibly suggest the habits, tastes, and memories of some friend deceased—for this I know no telepathic or clairvoyant analogy." (Professor Newbold, *Id.*, 9.)

On this point Mr. Podmore says:

"It is difficult indeed to discuss the content of these utterances at all apart from the dramatic form in which they are cast; and it would be ridiculous to pretend that the invariable assumption by the entranced

Mrs. Piper of an alien personality—a personality often realized with startling fidelity—is a fact wholly without evidential weight. (*Id.* 50.) The dramatic impersonations are almost uniformly consistent; the complex relationships and varying attitudes are kept distinct; there are, indeed, irrelevancies and incoherencies; but they are not such as to suggest confusion between different family histories or the attachment of *dossiers* to the wrong person.” (*Id.*, 77.)

No one is more competent to express an opinion upon the significance of the Mrs. Piper phenomena than Dr. Hodgson, who has for years made them a special study. He stated that he is fully convinced that actual communication from “deceased” persons has thus been received. (*Id.*, Pt. XXXIII, 357.) He points out that the dramatic form has become an integral part of the phenomena, and that the hand writes and the voice speaks at the same time on different subjects to different persons, many different communicators using both methods at the same and succeeding sittings and with apparently separate and individually coherent streams of consciousness.

To account for these facts by the theory of secondary personalities, it must be assumed that Mrs. Piper's mind is constituted of a large number of fragmentary consciousnesses, and that a certain number become permanently developed and stable as separate personalities through contact with and suggestions from sitters. But aside from the complexity of such a theory, it is pointed out that a necessary element to sustain it is lacking, for the bond of continuity of consciousness does not depend for existence upon the minds of living beings. “The mixtures of truth and error bear no *discernible* relation to the consciousness of the sitters.” (*Id.*, 360.)

From the above one may ascertain the drift of opinion among authorities upon psychic research upon the question of continuity of life beyond physical death.

The Fire-Ordeal.

III.

Fire-handling.

CLOSELY allied to the fire-walk, and no doubt involving the same explanation, is the phenomenon of fire-handling. The best authenticated case is that found in the account given by the scientist, Sir William Crookes, F. R. S., of seances with D. D. Home. (*Proc. S. P. R.*, Pt. XV., 103.) The phenomena there described were witnessed by Mr. Crookes and friends at the house of one of their number. They have been widely considered on account of the character and scientific attainments of the narrator. The following quotation gives the facts :

"Mr. Home sank back in his chair with his eyes closed, and remained still for a few minutes. He then rose up in a trance and made signs for his eyes to be blindfolded. This was done. He walked about the room in an undecided sort of manner, came up to each of the sitters and made some remark to them. He went to the candle on a side table and passed his fingers backwards and forwards through the flame several times so slowly that they must have been severely burnt under ordinary circumstances. He then held his fingers up, smiled and nodded as if pleased, took up a fine cambric handkerchief belonging to Miss Douglas, folded it upon his right hand and went to the fire. Here he threw off the bandage from his eyes and by means of the tongs lifted a piece of red-hot charcoal from the center and deposited it on the folded cambric; bringing it across the room, he told us to put out the candle on the table, knelt down close to Mrs. W. F. and spoke to her about it in a low voice. Occasionally he fanned the coal to a white heat with his breath. Coming a little further around the room, he spoke to Miss Douglas, saying, 'We shall have to burn a very small hole in this handkerchief. We have a reason for this which you do not see.' Presently he took the coal back to the

fire and handed the handkerchief to Miss Douglas. A small hole about an inch in diameter was burnt in the center, and there were too small points near it, but it was not even singed anywhere else. (I took the handkerchief away with me, and on testing it in my laboratory, found that it had not undergone the slightest chemical preparation which could have rendered it fire-proof.)

"Mr. Home again went to the fire, and after stirring the hot coals about with his hand, took out a red-hot piece nearly as big as an orange, and putting it in his right hand, covered it over with his left hand, so as to almost completely enclose it, and then blew into the small furnace thus extemporized until the lump of charcoal was nearly white-hot, and then drew my attention to the lambent flame which was flickering over the coal and licking round his fingers."

Another incident is related as follows:

"At Home's request, whilst he was entranced, I went with him to the fireplace in the back drawing room. He said, 'We want you to notice particularly what Dan is doing.' Accordingly, I stood close to the fire and stooped down to it when he put his hands in. He very deliberately pulled the lumps of hot coal off, one at a time, with his right hand, and touched one which was bright red. He then said, 'The power is not strong on Dan's hand, as we have been influencing the handkerchief most. It is more difficult to influence an inanimate body like that than living flesh, so, as the circumstances were favorable, we thought we would show you that we could prevent a red-hot coal from burning a handkerchief. We will collect more power on the handkerchief and repeat it before you. Now !'

"Mr. Home then waved the handkerchief about in the air two or three times, held it up above his head and then folded it up and laid it on his hand like a cushion; putting his other hand into the fire, took out a large lump of cinder red-hot at the lower part and placed the red part on the handkerchief. Under ordinary circumstances it would have been in a blaze. In about half a minute, he took it off the handkerchief with his hand, saying, 'As the power is not strong, if we leave the coal longer it will burn.' He then put it in his hand and brought it to the table in the front room, where all but myself had remained seated."

Mr. Andrew Lang, in quoting a similar statement he heard Mr. Crookes make, says he can produce plenty of living witnesses to the same experience with Home. (*Contemporary Review*, Vol. 70, 246.)

Bernadette, the seer of Lourdes, is described by Dr. Dozous as holding her hand, while in an ecstatic condition, in the flame of a candle for fifteen minutes, timed by himself. He examined her hand, which was found entirely unaffected by the fire.

Phenomena Coextensive with History.

From the few representative examples given in this and preceding articles on the subject, it appears that from the earliest traditions of the race to the present time there has been a class of phenomena characterized by human exemption from fire. They have occurred in association with religious ceremonies, judicial trials, ecstatic and trance conditions. If we trust human testimony a certain proportion of the alleged facts must be admitted. The probability of occasional genuine cases in all ancient times rests upon considerations mentioned on page 138. As to the modern ones quoted, the methods of observing, the scrutiny and caution of scientific inquiry, the regard for strict truth, the facility for preserving evidence, render them entirely credible.

Theories of Explanation.

What is the explanation?

Mr. Andrew Lang, who has given the subject much attention, says:

"For my part I remain without a theory, like all the European observers whom I have quoted. But, in my humble opinion, all the usual theories, whether of collective hallucination (photographic cameras being hallucinated), of psychical causes, of chemical application, of leathery skin on the soles of the feet, and so on, are inadequate." (*Proc. S. P. R.*, Pt. XXXVI, 14.)

In an article by M. A. De Rochas in *Popular Science Monthly*, Vol. XXI, 645, treating the matter without the light of recent research, three possible explanations are suggested: 1, diminution of sensation of heat by evaporation from the surface of the skin; 2, insensibility obtained by preliminary artifice; 3, illusion respecting the intensity of the source of heat.

The inadequacy of these must be apparent. For instance, there is little, if any, similarity between plunging the finger in hot metal for an instant and deliberately walking about over red-hot stones for half a minute, or holding coals in the hand. Nor does the evaporation theory explain the exemption of the dry fern leaves around the walkers' ankles, or of the handkerchief. Again, there is an entire absence of any evidence suggesting preparatory artifice to protect, and Mr. Crooke's laboratory examination of the handkerchief made this certain in that instance. If, however, it could be supposed that the feet of the Fijians and other walkers were prepared, what about those of Col. Gudgeon and the other Europeans who went through? And, finally, the bare statements respecting the quantity of the material burned, the length of time consumed in burning, the evident condition of the resulting coals and the highly heated stones, to say nothing of Dr. Hocken's melting thermometer with its registry of 282 degrees, renders the theory of illusion as to the heat quite ridiculous.

A more up-to-date list must include the two following:

First, that of insensibility caused by hypnotic suggestion or ecstasy. The inhibition of sensation through these causes is well known, but this phenomenon is not merely insensibility, but exemption from injury to the skin or flesh. Suggestion affects psychic states, but can not suspend physical law.

Second, the theory of hallucination of the observers, all laboring under the delusion that they saw what did

not occur. This is too remote to consider; besides, a camera is not subject to hallucination.

The cause must exist outside these theories. Let us note a few points more or less common to the cases—

(a) The phenomena occur only in connection with some human being. A psychical element must be involved.

(b) The performers are in a supernormal state, as trance or ecstacy, or a physical condition preceded by a special mental preparation, as religious ceremony, rite, prayer, invocation, etc. They often claim the gift by virtue of holy, austere, and pure living. The Tokio fire-walkers eat no meat, drink no stimulants, and spend hours in prayer and purification prior to the walk.

Home and Bernadette were entranced. The Bulgarian *Nistinares*, in character considered specially just, are, while seized with the desire to dance in the flames, under religious ecstacy. Regarding these, Mr. Lang says:

"The crowd dances a *horo* (round dance) about the glowing logs. Heaps of embers are made and water is thrown on the ground. The musicians play the tune called 'L'Air Nistinar.' A *Nistinare* breaks through the dance, *turns blue*, trembles like a leaf, and glares wildly. The dance ends. The wildest *Nistinare*, with naked feet, climbs the pyre of glowing embers. The music plays, and the *Nistinares* dance to the time in the fire, and utter prophesies. He dances till his face resumes the ordinary expression; then he begins to feel the burning; he leaps the pyre and places his feet in the mud made by the libations of water." (*Contemp. R.*, Vol. 70, 244.)

(c) The performers generally claim that the phenomena are the result of the exercise of power of some god or spirit.

The *Nistinares* ascribe it to SS. Constantine and Helena. The Polynesians, generally, invoke mythological spirits. Iamblicus explains the cases among the ancient Greek mediums as the work of spirits. All of

the Home phenomena were claimed to be the work of discarnate souls.

(d) There is often a marked psychic change in those who exercise the power during and coincident with such exercise.

(e) The benefits of the power are extended to others under certain conditions; and the beneficiary may experience sensation for which there is no apparent cause within himself. Note the sensation like slight electric shocks spoken of by Col. Gudgeon, and the assurance given Miss Ozaki when urged to pass through the Shinto fire-ordeal, that thereby her "feet would become strong, and feeling would become good (comfortable)."

(f) When the conditions under which exemption is extended are broken the exemption ceases.

A friend of Col. Gudgeon was badly burned (the only one), and the reason assigned was that he violated the directions, and, like Lot's wife, looked behind.

Bearing these points in mind, I would call attention to what I said on "The Self of Psychic Energy," on pages 30 and 31, and my quotation from M. Aksakof, regarding that little-known element of the inner man; it "is neither purely psychical in character nor is confined within the periphery of our bodily forms; but that it can overstep the bounds of the body, and can exert, either within or without the body, activities, may, even of a plastic kind."

Do these facts suggest an explanation? Are the heat-vibrations arrested and nullified before they reach the body by some activity or quality of this mysterious element of the inner man's constitution, and is such activity aroused or quality conferred by the exercise of a latent power of the subliminal self awakened by the normal mind, or, through a like power or the aid of a mind outside of the body, as claimed in some cases?

But granting this, the problem as to *how* the vibrations are actually arrested is still unsolved. But we must remember we are dealing with a psychic phenom-

enon as well as a physical one, and that we therefore can not solve it by the laws of matter alone any more than a "vital" phenomenon can be expressed in terms of unorganized matter. For instance, the power of the cell which compels oxygen and carbonic acid to move against the slope of pressure—the order of the law of physics—is as much a mystery.

The future study of like cases as psychic phenomena will probably evolve a satisfactory explanation.

AN excellent means of realizing the nature of our conventional life and consciousness—the personal man—is by forming a conception of how and of what it is evolved. The most fundamental thing we can know of ourselves is that we are conscious; next, that consciousness changes, and changes according to the things and ideals to which we relate ourselves or become conscious of. We have a conception of the physical world because we have evolved suitable means of becoming conscious of some of its states, that is, through sensation. Through introspection and reasoning we change our conscious states related to our purely ideal world.

Learning has taught us that our perception of the physical world is not altogether truth-telling; it leads to some false conclusions as to the real nature of things. It does not require much thinking to inform us also that our consciousness of our ideals is largely a consciousness of false conceptions. Such a natural state may therefore be one of illusion. The popular belief, therefore, that the conventional standards are the true ones is incorrect. They are but temporary gauges of transitory states of consciousness that are useful only as long as they assist to the realization of true ones.

We must build truth-embodying consciousness or we will never attain a high degree of knowledge or realization.

Poise in Action, and Static Expression.

BE reposeful. Cultivate poise in all you do. The whole cosmos offers you this instruction. Note the perfect balance of cause and effect. Nature is the great economist.

Mastery is as broad as the field of human activities: this is only one instance where you may intelligently control, or become a spendthrift of vital energy and foster disorganized thought.

Do you want to run up stairs or up hill because "it makes you tired to walk slowly?" It is because you do not balance your effort with the need. Do you race ahead when walking with your friends and find no pleasure in strolling leisurely? It is because you lack repose. Are you irritable and nervous and feel impelled to continual, even irrational action? It is because you do not relax. Does effort, work, pleasure, exhaust you readily? It may be because you have no reserve force on account of the continual strain you cultivate.

When you act, do so as though it were a finality, and not as though you were intending to indefinitely continue it. When it is done dismiss the mental effort that accomplished it. Then for the next act call into requisition just enough power for its need.

Repose and relaxation as understood here do not mean quiescence during merely some particular half-hour, but between every individual effort that has no necessary connection with another. Poise here means a perfect balance of effort to the requirement of the moment.

The next time you go out for a pleasure walk take each step as though your pleasure were summed up in that one; when ready for the next step call into requisition just enough power to accomplish it. Walk for half an hour and note how restful it is.

This habitual lack of poise comes from unnecessary

tension of the mind ; from keeping the consciousness on the alert when there is no call for it. The result is that the habit is not only fostered as a state of the normal mind, but it affects the deeper being and moulds the state of the subliminal mind, whence it is ever seeking expression. The first effect is an unnatural and usually an unconscious tension of the muscles, which prompts to irrational, nervous, and unnecessary movements. Action, when it comes, is overcharged with effort, and there is no nice and exact adjustment of the same which makes perfect expression. This tension becomes a fixed habit, a "fixed idea" of the subliminal self. It exhausts the energies, and vital depletion is the result.

Practice relaxation at particular times, as heretofore described ; but do not neglect to extend poise into all action. This mistake is often made ; one sets apart a half-hour for meditation or relaxation, and takes no thought for the remaining waking hours.

What is grace but this poise, this perfect adjustment of power to the desired end ; no more nor less than enough—the perfect economy of vital expression? This is not only the basis of grace, but is essential to perfect health and serenity. Expression is thus static as well as dynamic.

Adjust yourself to this law of expression. Use only enough power to accomplish the end. When the thought or act is finished let it be a finality ; do not hold the effort continually. Dismiss it and repose in its sufficiency.

Until you have learned this you can not always command true rest. Sleep alone can not confer it, because the subliminal self does not sleep, and when you have fastened these habits upon it they continue their effects even in sleep. When this relaxation and habitual poise are learned, rest is attainable at any time and without sleep. You will add to your attainment by cultivating this.

Etchings.

Sentiment and Soul-depth.

MANY imagine that when they have lost sentiment and grown very practical a great gain has been made. It may be that in losing the index of a lofty quality they failed to conserve the quality itself, leaving life a dreary waste without the embellishment of imagination or the inspiration of depth of soul.

Sentiment is an adaptation of the interpretative, the æsthetic impulses of the soul to environmental conditions. When life is young these assert themselves strongly, and coming in conflict with the expedient and practical often become depreciated. It is an expression—merely an expression—of a deeper and finer nature than the exclusively practical according to the criterion of necessity.

When the demands of bread-winning press hard and claim all the thoughts and endeavor in order to meet the end, or when the disappointment of false philosophy, unwise ambition, misdirected energy, depresses the soul, sentiment dies. Alas for him who lets the nobler impulse which was its inspiration expire with it. Thereafter he drinks only from the wells of supposed failure and summons from the depths of soul only memories. The rest of life becomes a compliance with conventions and the demands of expediency.

Analyze the work of poets, artists, geniuses who move the human mind to nobler things, and you find that it meets with powerful response because they recall the world to that which it neglects or has permitted to lapse in favor of the sterily practical.

Keep fresh these fountains whence sprang the earlier sentiments. What you called sentiment per-

chance no longer finds that special form of expression, but if the power that suggested it is not discouraged it will manifest in many ennobling ways. It will inspire in you the perception of realities behind the appearances; color and form and harmony and everything that appeals to appreciation will awake a response from that deeper side of your nature which is ever suggesting to you more than the external world appears upon its face to hold, and making life richer and fuller from within.

Autumn's Adieu.

The annual cycle of expression nears its close : Nature pauses as if in contemplation.

Soft variant winds flow across the wooded ridges whose frost-dyed foliage vibrates a nature-song with cadence measured by succeeding waves. It is as though a mighty spirit breathes a note from every tree and ridge.

A change impends. The winds subside : the woods stand motionless. Between the interlacing branches the sunlight, subdued by Indian Summer purple, filters through and lights into color the paths now strewn with leaves and pine needles. In the pensive quietude a softer music rises. It is the sound of falling leaves. Downward they circle and quiver through the light and shade.

Joy of attainment, pathos of decadence, suggest. Meadows of goldenrod and wild fennel light the aspect. The last wild berry hangs in readiness to consign its treasure to hospitable soil ; the grasses lean their blades toward earth.

Over Nature's face flit signs portentous of change. Winds mingle with their woodland odor the suggestion of frost. Formless clouds drift hurriedly by. Foliage takes on the glow of expiring flame. Insects seek winter retreat. The crow calls loudly across the field. Autumn stirs from her languor and says adieu.

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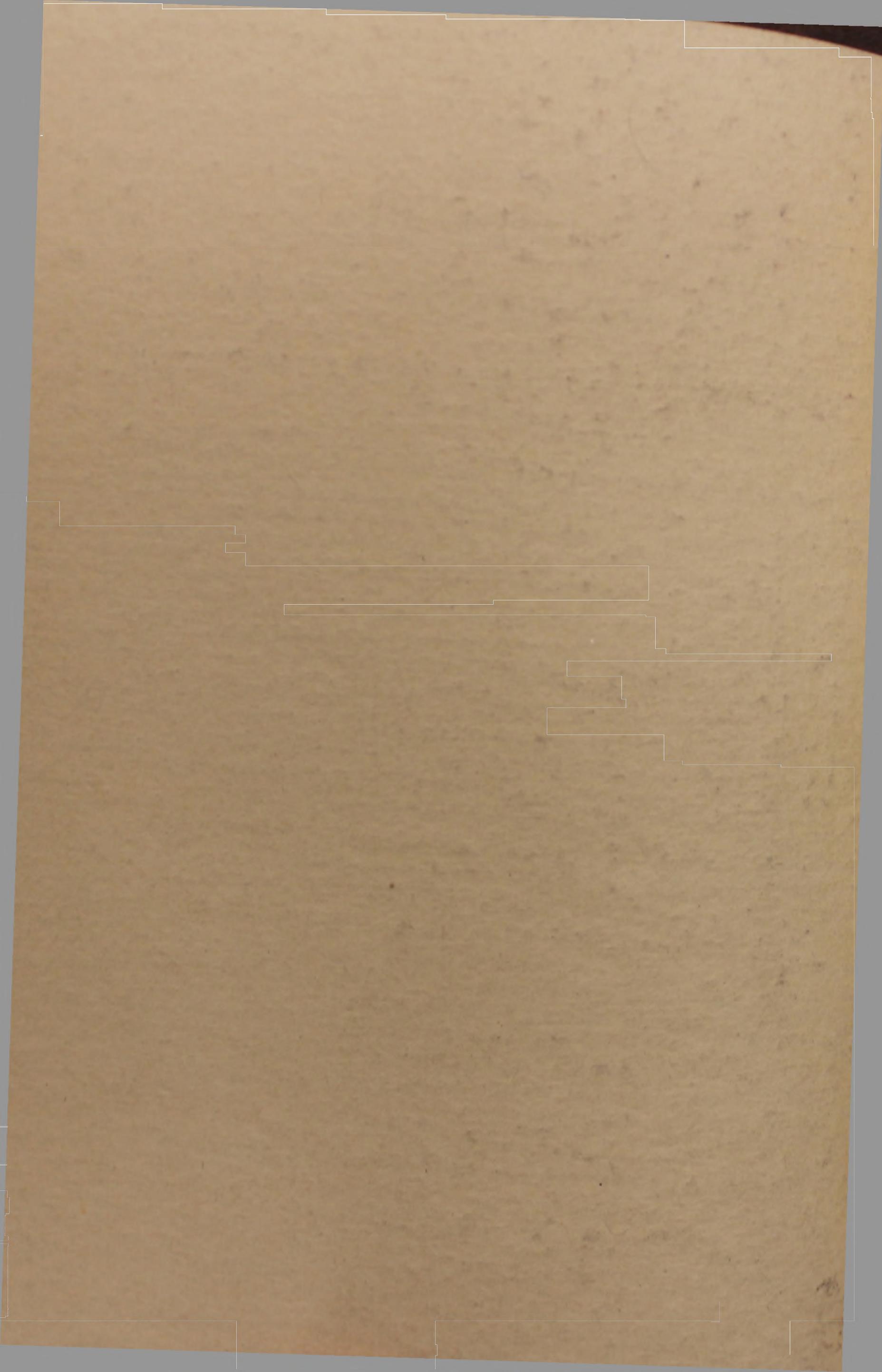
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